

SNAPSHOT OF VERSION 5.0

Introduction

The Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) rolling ten-year plan to increase the capacity and efficiency of the National Airspace System (NAS) while enhancing safety and security. The commitments and decisions in the OEP have emerged from a close collaboration with the entire aviation community, including the airlines, cargo carriers, airports, manufacturers, general aviation, the Department of Defense (DOD), the National Weather Service, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, all with a focus on the air transportation services delivered to the flying public.

The OEP represents the agreements and commitments of the FAA, DOD and the aviation community to modernize the NAS and solve problems in core areas, or quadrants: Arrival/Departure Rates, En Route Congestion, Airport Weather Conditions, and En Route Severe Weather.

The tragic events of September 11, along with a depressed U.S. economy have significantly impacted the airline industry. Overall, the number of airport operations during 2002 was about 10 percent below 2000 levels, and the number of en route operations during 2002 was about five percent lower than 2000 levels. While traffic has recovered more rapidly at Midwest airports than on the East and West coasts, airports that consistently demanded attention in the past continue to do so and as the economy improves, we fully expect that the demand for aviation services will increase to pre-September 11 levels. In fact, one aspect of the demand for aviation is already affecting operations; namely, airlines are continuing to increase usage of smaller aircraft, including regional jets, adding to already complex traffic flow management in many areas across the nation.

For these reasons, we are staying the course to build an aviation system for the 21st century with efficiency and capacity improvements needed to meet the growing demand for air travel and cargo shipment. At the same time, we have taken into account the current economic climate by providing increased clarity about avionics requirements that build on existing equipage. Version 5.0 of the OEP captures commitments and investments across the aviation community and presents key accomplishments, activities and policy decisions that the community has reviewed and advocated through a process established by RTCA, the standards-setting association for the aviation community.

Major Upgrades Require User Participation

